

Message Text

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ACTION HA-02

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O 191155Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8632
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY
USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 4950

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT PARA 7)

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AF
SUBJ: ATTEMPT TO LIBERATE AFGHAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: A) GENEVA 9131, B) TEHRAN 5821

1. WE WERE VERY INTERESTED TO RECEIVE USMISSION GENEVA'S ACCOUNT (REF A) OF THE JOINT APPROACH TO ICRC. WHILE WE ARE PLEASED THAT MR. BOREL PLANS TO VISIT AFGHANISTAN ON OR ABOUT JUNE 25, WE ARE DISTRESSED BY THE LENGTH OF TIME IT HAS TAKEN OUR BUREAUCRACY AND ICRC TO ACT. WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE REPORTS OF FORMER AFGHAN SENIOR OFFICIALS BEING EXECUTED.

2. WE ALSO WISH HERE TO ADD SOME ADDITIONAL COMMENTS. ON JUNE 19, CHARGE MET WITH UK AMBASSADOR CROOK AND SHARED SUBSTANCE REF A. IN TURN, UK AMBASSADOR DID SAME WITH SIMILAR MESSAGE HE HAD RECEIVED FROM UK MISSION IN GENEVA. FROM LATTER MESSAGE IT APPEARED THAT THE ALREADY LAID-ON BOREL TRIP TO
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KABUL WAS SOLELY FOR PURPOSE OF ADDRESSING POLITICAL DETAINEE QUESTION.

3. HOWEVER, NEITHER OF THE TWO MESSAGES INDICATED WHETHER BOREL INTENDED TO TRY TO MEET WITH AFGHAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN. BOTH UK AMBASSADOR CROOK AND CHARGE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT BOREL TRY TO

DO SO SINCE, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THIS SUBJECT HAS BEEN CLOSELY HELD AT HIGH AFGHAN GOVERNMENT LEVEL.

4. FURTHERMORE, GIVEN THE DISCUSSIONS AMIN HAS HAD WITH ASST. SECRETARY SAUNDERS AND AMBASSADOR ELIOT, AND THE USG'S DEMONSTRATED CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, I BELIEVE IT WOULD ADD WEIGHT TO BOREL'S VISIT IF, IN ANY MEETING HE HAD WITH THE FONMIN, BOREL MENTIONED THAT THE ICRC WAS APPRISED OF THE NEW YORK CITY DISCUSSION AMIN HAD WITH ASST. SECRETARY SAUNDERS. THIS WOULD UNDERSCORE OUR CONCERN OVER THE AFGHAN GOVT'S TREATMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND WOULD SHOW THAT THE US GOVT HAS NOT BEEN SITTING ON ITS HANDS.

5. OUR OTHER COMMENT RELATES TO THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL DETAINEES IN AFGHANISTAN. OUR GUESS IS THAT THE TOTAL LIES BETWEEN 200-400, OF WHICH THE NUMBER OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IS PERHAPS BETWEEN 50-100.

6. WE WOULD ROUGHLY CATEGORIZE THE PRISONERS AS FALLING INTO TWO GROUPS: 1) THOSE BELONGING TO THE MOHAMMADZAI CLAN (WHO HAVE DOMINATED AFGHAN POLITICS FOR THE LAST 150 YEARS); AND 2) THOSE WHO ARE NOT MOHAMMADZAIS BUT WHO SERVED IN SENIOR POSITIONS UNDER PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS. WE DO NOT KNOW THE RELATIVE SIZE OF EACH GROUP.

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7. THE PLIGHT OF THE FIRST GROUP IS MORE SERIOUS, AND ALL THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE IN THIS GROUP. THESE MOHAMMADZAIS HAVE LOST EVERYTHING. THE STATE HAS CONFISCATED ALL THEIR MOVEABLE AND IMMOVEABLE PROPERTY, SO THEY POSSESS NOTHING EXCEPT WHAT THEY MAY BE WEARING. IT IS THIS GROUP WHOM WE FEEL SURE WOULD WELCOME ASYLUM ABROAD, FOR THEY HAVE NOTHING TO GO BACK TO IN PRESENT-DAY AFGHANISTAN. THEY ARE DAILY VILIFIED IN THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED AFGHAN PRESS AND, IF THEY WERE TO STAY HERE, THEY WOULD BE UTTERLY DESTITUTE AND PROBABLY BE GIVEN, IF ANYTHING, THE MOST MENIAL, DEGRADING JOBS. ON JUNE 15 THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT SOME 23 OF THEIR MOHAMMADZAI RELATIVES RESIDING ABROAD HAD BEEN STRIPPED OF THEIR AFGHAN CITIZENSHIP. OUR GUESS IS THAT IF THIS MOHAMMADZAI ELEMENT IS PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, THEY TOO WILL BE DECLARED NON-CITIZENS. IT IS THIS ELEMENT WHICH, ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS ALONE, DESERVES FOREMOST ATTENTION AND SYMPATHY.

8. THE SECOND GROUP ARE NON-MOHAMMADZAIS WHOSE ONLY CRIMES ARE EITHER THEIR HAVING ONCE SERVED IN SENIOR

GOVERNMENT JOBS UNDER KING ZAHER OR PRESIDENT DAOUD, THEIR BEING PERCEIVED TO HAVE SOME OPPOSITIONIST LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL, OR THEIR PRESUMED HOSTILITY TO THE NEW REGIME. MOST HAVE THEIR FAMILIES INTACT IN KABUL AND THEIR PROPERTY UNTOUCHED. THE GOVERNMENT HAS SAID THAT THESE INDIVIDUALS LIKE SOME OF THEIR MOHAMMADZAI COLLEAGUES, WILL BE TRIED FOR ALLEGED CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS. WHILE SOME IN THIS SECOND GROUP MAY ALSO WISH TO IMMIGRATE, BECAUSE THEY SEE NO FUTURE HERE, THEIR PLIGHT IS NOT AS SEVERE AS

THOSE OF THE MOHAMMADZAIS.

9. REQUEST: DEPARTMENT INSTRUCT GENEVA AS FOLLOWS:
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1) INFORM THE ICRC THAT WE THINK IT MAY BE IMPORTANT FOR THE SUCCESS OF BOREL'S MISSION THAT BOREL MEET WITH THE AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND THAT THE ICRC SHOULD CONSIDER SENDING A MESSAGE TO THE FONMIN REQUESTING AN APPOINTMENT FOR BOREL;
2) THAT BOREL BE AUTHORIZED TO MENTION TO THE FONMIN THAT HE IS COGNIZANT OF THE DISCUSSION WHICH TOOK PLACE IN NEW YORK WITH ASST. SECRETARY SAUNDERS; AND,
3) THAT BOREL BE GIVEN OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE TWO TYPES OF POLITICAL DETAINEES IN KABUL'S PRISONS AND BE INFORMED OF OUR CONTINUED SENSE OF URGENCY THAT ACTION BE TAKEN SOON.
AMSTUTZ

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